

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 05572 190800Z

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6415

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T CANBERRA 5572

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, PI, ID, AS

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE TIMOR

REF: STATE 194779

1. RENOUF TOLD ME TODAY THAT CURRENT GOA ASSESSMENT OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR SITUATION IS THAT INDONESIANS WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO MOVE INTO SITUATION, WHICH SEEMS BE DETERIORATING, ON GROUNDS " RESTORING LAW AND ORDER". ACKNOWLEDGING THAT SUHARTO HAS BEEN VERY CAREFUL IN APPROACHING PROBLEM, HE SAID REPORTS, AMONG OTHERS, FROM RECENTLY RETURNED DFA OFFICIAL INDICATE THINGS ARE OUT OF HAND WITH UNCOUNTED DEATHS AND OVERFLIGHTS INDICATED NUMBER OF VILLAGES AFIRE. ALSO ARMS SEEM TO BE PLENTIFUL. PRINCIPAL FIGHTING SEEMS TO BE BETWEEN UDT AND FRETELIN. 400-MAN PORTUGUESE FORCE, WHICH HE SAYS MAINLY ADMINISTRATIVE, CLEARLY CAN'T RESTORE ORDER.

2. FROM AUSTRALIAN POINT OF VIEW, INDONESIAN MOVE TO "RESTORE LAW AND ORDER" WILL BE EASIER TO EXPLAIN TO PUBLIC OPINION, BUT IF INDONESIANS USE MILITARY EQUIPMENT PROVIDED BY GOA IT WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT. HE SAID SOME PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES HAD SUGGESTED AUSTRALIAN INTERVENTION BUT THIS OBVIOUSLY "OUT OF QUESTION". PERCIVAL

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PAGE 02 CANBER 05572 190800Z

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